Religious freedom panel adds Nigeria to list of world's worst violators

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WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The **U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom** added Nigeria to its list of the world's worst violators of religious freedom in an annual report released May 1.

Citing sectarian violence, attempts to expand Sharia law and complaints by Christians in the north of discrimination at the hands of Muslim-controlled governments, the advisory panel for the first time designated Nigeria a "Country of Particular Concern."

Nigeria joins 12 other nations identified as the world's worst violators. They include Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Sudan and Uzbekistan -- countries all on a separate list of CPCs managed by the U.S. State Department.

The panel, an independent government commission created by an act of Congress in 1998, urged the State Department to also add Iraq, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Vietnam to the list, along with Saudi Arabia, which the State Department lists as a CPC but has indefinitely waived any policy response to violations of religious freedom.